Demonstration Response and Safety Team (DRST) Standard Operating Guideline (SOG)

September 2024 v2

Introduction:
The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed by tradition and by its defining values to the freedom of speech, thought, inquiry, and artistic expression for all members of its community. The exercise of free speech, including demonstrations, marches, rallies, leafletting, and picketing and equivalent activities ("demonstrations"), has long been recognized as a legitimate form of self-expression in the university community. The University encourages the exercise of free speech, acknowledging that free speech and expression in a university community will sometimes include exchanges that are controversial, deeply passionate, and even uncomfortable for members of the University community.

Individuals and groups planning demonstrations are encouraged to be aware of their rights and responsibilities, university policies, and available resources. These include, but are not limited to:

- UMass Amherst Demonstration Guidelines
- UMass Amherst Regulations for Use of Property
- UMass Amherst Code of Student Conduct
- UMass Amherst Principles of Employee Conduct

Students are also encouraged to consult with Student Legal Services Office, Student Engagement and Leadership Office, Center for Education and Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) and Student Conduct and Community Standards Office, if they have questions about their rights and responsibilities or questions about specific university policy or guidance to ensure awareness of their protected rights, University of Massachusetts Amherst policies, and the availability of campus resources to support the safe exercise of protected rights.

Protest, demonstrations, or other acts of free expression on campus may prompt a counter-protest or other forms of expression. When these arise, the expression of all parties will be supported in accordance with university policies and this guidance. On occasion, a separate area may be designated for those seeking to counter-protest.

Purpose:
The purpose of the Demonstration Response and Safety Team (DRST) Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) is to outline the structure, responsibilities, and guidelines to the university's response to demonstrations.

Demonstration Response and Safety Team (DRST):
The DRST is a group of staff members responsible for supporting the First Amendment right to free speech, while also providing educational resources and supporting the continuity of university operations. During demonstrations, the DRST will communicate with and listen to event leader(s) to understand their perspectives and what the group hopes to achieve through their activities. If actions, by an individual or groups, are disruptive to university operations and/or could constitute a violation of university or campus policies, the DRST will communicate this with the event leader(s) with the goal that leaders will voluntarily comply with laws and university policies.

To ensure an effective university and safe response to demonstrations/protest coordination between university representatives is essential. The DRST will evaluate events in a viewpoint neutral manner and provide updates to the university leadership as needed.

Responsibilities of the DRST:

- Be present at demonstrations or protests.
- Welcome and educate campus demonstration and/or protest participants on free speech rights and responsibilities.
- Identify the leader(s) to help the DRST constructively engage, as appropriate, to listen, understand their perspectives, and work together to find solutions.
- Observe demonstrations and/or protests and communicate with the demonstration/protest leader(s) if a disruption of university activities and/or anything that might endanger the safety of those around and/or violate campus policies occurs
- Communicate with campus leadership when actions exhibited by individuals/groups at demonstrations and/or protests disrupt university activities and/or endanger the safety of those around and/or violations of campus policies.
- De-escalate tensions and provide a way for protestors to conclude their demonstration where their perspectives and voices have been heard with a clear path forward. DRST members will provide off-ramp strategies to help safely facilitate a resolution to the issues/challenges at hand.
- Document any disruptive activities in the most accurate way possible (i.e., notes, cell phone video, and/or photos).
- Participate in after action meetings as required.

DRST Activation:

In the event of a demonstration on campus, DRST Facilitators will be activated to support the demonstration. When the DRST is activated, a DRST Team Leader will be identified. The DRST Team Leader will be responsible for coordinating with DRST Facilitators on site and be the primary communicator with individuals engaged in the demonstration.

The DRST Main Functions:

Try identifying a demonstration protest leader(s) for the event and establish a relationship to be able to listen, understand their perspectives, work together to find solutions, and educate about the expectations of demonstrations activities, as defined by campus policies. If a demonstration / protest leader (s) cannot be identified, address the entire group.

  - Provide immediate access to relevant university policies, guidelines, and codes.
  - Observe and intervene if disruptive behavior is present, when given approval by the DRST Team Leader and/or campus leadership.
  - Engage in mediation, de-escalation conflict resolution and or negotiation to address the issue/challenge at hand.

The primary focus is observation, education, and de-escalation (as needed)

- **Observe:** The DRST will observe carefully and respectfully and focus on understanding the concerns of the protestors while ensuring that the event remains peaceful and in compliance with laws and campus polices.
- **Educate:** The DRST will educate protestors by respectfully having conversations about their rights and responsibilities during demonstrations and clarifying as necessary any campus policies. Examples of conduct that is not permitted, including, but not limited to:

- Blocking access to campus facilities or activities
- Obstructing pedestrian or vehicular traffic or restrict free movement of persons on university property
- Using bullhorns or other loud or amplified sound-making devices in a way that disrupts academic or administrative activities of the university
- Engaging in theft, vandalism, loitering, or property damage
- Obstructing the passage into or out of buildings by blocking doorways
- Refusing to leave a building or area that is closed or after receiving a directive from a university official acting in good faith performance of their duties
- Preventing members of a class from being able to hear the lecture or take an exam
- Preventing an instructor from giving a lecture by means of shouts of significant interruptions and/or preventing researchers from conducting their research.

- **De-Escalation:** If the demonstration might endanger the safety of those around and /or is in violation of campus policies, notify demonstrators that the campus reserves the right to limit demonstrations. If elements of the demonstration violate policy, DRST will engage in a conversation with the demonstration / protest leader(s). While the goal is to educate the demonstration / protest leaders (s) and/or group to stop the violation immediately, if they do not stop the violation, the DRST will seek off ramps. No one off ramp solution is applicable to all demonstrations / protests, but provided below are some same examples the DRST will consider utilizing:

DRST Process

Step 1: Welcome & Support

- Once the DRST team leader receives approval to have a discussion with the individual/group, two DRST members will go over to the individual/group.

    - If possible, try to determine if the demonstration has a leader assigned, as this would be the individual with whom you communicate.

- **Introduction & Resource Distribution**
    - Identify yourself (name) and role on the DRST to the individual/group.
    - Thank the individual / group for expressing their views, affirm the university's commitment to First Amendment freedom of speech, and share guidelines, policies, and codes.
    - **Use <u>Script #1: Welcome and Education</u>**
    - **Hand them the DRST Free Speech Rights and Responsibilities Handout**

- It should be noted that Student Affairs and Campus Life (SACL) staff work extremely closely with student organizations and have established positive relationships with them. During most large

demonstrations, protests and/or marches SACL staff are on site and interact with the student organizations. With any demonstrations, protests and/or marches it is important to identify if a SACL representative is on site and engage with this individual as they can assist with communications.

- The DRST Team Leader will designate a DRST Facilitator to begin a DRST Incident Report, documenting the event leader's contact information, as well as additional interactions throughout the course of the demonstration.

Step 2a: Witnessing Potential Threats to Public Safety and/or Disruptive Behavior

If a demonstration / protest leads to a threat to public safety or disruptive behavior the DRST will follow one of two paths:

Threat to Public Safety
If a DRST member or another member on campus witnesses threats to public safety, they will notify the DRST Team Leader.

- The DRST Team Leader will discuss the situation with members of the DRST Team and campus leadership to determine if it is a threat to public safety.

- If it is a threat to public safety, the DRST Team leader will follow these steps:
[redacted]

Step 2b: Discussion with Individual / Group

Disruptive Behavior

If the behavior is distributive in nature and/or violates campus polices, the DRST Team leader will follow these steps:

- Identify the nature and extent of disturbance and what policy and/or law it is violating.
- Contact campus leadership to report the disruptive behavior, policy and/or law it is violating, location and number of individuals involved.

Notice #1

- DRST Team Leader will receive approval from campus leadership to engage in a conversation with the demonstrators / protesters using **Script Notice #1.**

[redacted] During the engagement of the DRST with the demonstrators / protesters using **Script Notice #1** [redacted]

[redacted]

Notice #2

- If the disruptive behavior, policy and/or law violation continues after conversations with the DRST, the DRST will notify the campus leadership and engage in a conversation with the demonstrators / protesters using **Script Notice #2.**

[redacted]

Notice #3

- [redacted]If, after issuing two notices, the disruptive behavior, policy and/or law it is violation continues, the DRST will notify the campus leadership and engage in a conversation with the demonstrators / protesters using **Script Notice #3** [redacted]

[redacted]

Final Notice

- [redacted]If, after three notices, the disruptive behavior, policy and/or law violation continues, the DRST will notify the campus leadership and engage in a conversation with the demonstrators / protesters using the **Final Notice** [redacted]

During the final engagement of the DRST with the demonstrators / protesters the DRST will utilize the **Final Notice,** and all attempts will be made by the DRST to de-escalate the situation.

If after the **Final Notice** has been discussed and all attempts to find off ramps have not successfully ended the disruptive behavior, policy and/or law violation, UMPD will be notified that the final notice has been given.

Evaluation, Processing and Reporting:

- Once the demonstration has ended the DRST will meet immediately to conduct a debrief.

- The Team Leader may designate someone to take notes.
- All DRST members who participated will file a report via email with the DRST Team Leader.
- This report will include what worked well and what did not.
- This report will include general observations about the activity as well as documentation of specific concerns.
- This report should include attachments of any photo/video evidence recorded by team members or shared by other reliable sources.
- The DRST Team Leader will submit the DRST Incident Report to the DRST and complete the Student Conduct Referral for any demonstration that receives Notice #1, regardless of whether or not the dangerous/disruptive behavior ceases after Notice #1 is issued.

Scripts

Welcome & Introduction

[redacted]

Notice #1: Directed to the individual who has been identified as the point of contact

[redacted]

Notice #2: Directed to the individual who has been identified as the point of contact

[redacted]

[redacted]

Notice #3: Directed to the individual who has been identified as the point of contact

[redacted]

Final Notice

[redacted]